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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 6496

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT IN
JAPAN

¶1. LEAD STORIES: All Thursday morning papers gave top play to the launch on Wednesday of a DPJ-led government in coalition with the Social Democratic Party and People's New Party following the election of DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama as prime minister.

¶2. "Foundation of U.S.-Japan Relations Should Be Maintained" The moderate Yomiuri stated in an editorial (9/17): "Concerning the MSDF's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, Prime Minister Hatoyama has said that he will not simply extend it after it expires next January. He should seek ways to continue the operation by considering measures other than 'simply' extending it. Regarding U.S. force realignment, including Futenma relocation, the steady implementation of the U.S.-Japan agreement is the fastest way to reduce the burden on local municipalities, including Okinawa."

¶3. "New Administration Should Eliminate Concerns about Its Policy toward U.S." The business-oriented Nikkei editorialized (9/17): "With the Hatoyama administration, there is concern about relations with the U.S. Prime Minister Hatoyama plans to hold his first meeting with President Obama during his upcoming visit to the U.S. The DPJ does not plan to extend Japan's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, which is set to expire next January, but the USG is asking Japan to reconsider. Concerning U.S. force realignment, including Futenma relocation, there are also differences of opinion between the U.S., which calls for the implementation of the agreement made between the two governments, and the new administration. The prime minister said in his inaugural speech that building a relationship of trust with the President is the first step. Actions to maintain the robust U.S.-Japan alliance are indispensable in order to achieve that goal."

¶4. "Priority Should Be Placed on National Interests" The conservative Sankei argued in an editorial (9/17): "We cannot help feeling concerned about the Hatoyama administration's diplomatic and

security policy. Will the new administration be able to respond realistically and flexibly while maintaining an alliance with the Social Democratic Party, which considers the SDF to be unconstitutional?... Concern also remains about Foreign Minister Okada. While stating that the U.S.-Japan alliance is the cornerstone [of Japan's diplomacy], he stresses an 'equal partnership' with the U.S. His statement contains no specific vision that explains exactly what his idea means. The foreign minister has expressed his intention to call on the U.S. to adopt a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons. We should not forget that Japan's peace and security are being protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Diplomacy that just plays around with words could undermine the U.S.-Japan alliance. Prime Minister Hatoyama should take a pragmatic approach and exercise his leadership in order to dispel such concerns.... We urge him to reconsider whether it is appropriate to halt the refueling operation in the Indian Ocean even though the U.S. has expressed hope for its continuation."

ROOS